

A
SERMON
Preach'd in the
CATHEDRAL
OF
LINCOLN,

August 1. 1680.

(Being the Assize Sunday.)

By THO. HINDMARSH A.M. and Vicar
of *Long Ourisby* in *Lincolnshire*.

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To the Right Honourable and Truly Vertuous

T H E

Lady E L I Z A B E T H,

Countess Dowager of Strafford.

M A D A M,

THe many and great Favours which I have received from you, exceeding all possibility of requital; have left me nothing to betake myself to but an ingenious acknowledgment. Neither could I think but that a private acknowledgment was too mean an expression, either of the greatness of my Obligations, or the gratitude of my own mind. I have therefore prefixed your name to the following Discourse; not from any flattering Opinion, as if it could merit this honour, but that I may by these presents manifest to the World in what strict, solemn, but yet pleasing bonds, I am for ever tied, and devoted to your Family. Your own Vertues being very perspicuous both in your Prosperous and Adverse condition, hath produced in all generous and loyal souls the highest esteem and veneration for you: so that I need not mention your near Relation to that great Example of Excellency and Fatality, your dearest Lord. If I should stretch out this Epistle into a large Panegyrick, I need not fear the injuries of

THE EPISTLE.

Truth, (the Subject being as far from flattery, as the necessity of it) but yet it is not unlikely that I should displease you : for all Persons of your Honour and Merit account it an Assault upon their Modesty to hear themselves applauded : and I am confident that you are better-pleased with Meriting, than Hearing your own Commendations. I shall therefore wave that, and betake myself to this, which is more agreeable to my Profession, and more acceptable to You ; and that is, to beg of God that he would still continue to crown you with the Blessings of this Life, till he receive you to a better ; which is the hearty Prayer of

Your Honours

Most humble and faithful

Servant and Chaplain

THO. HINDMARSH.

A SERMON, &c.

ACTS xxiv. v. 25. the former part.

And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled.

IF Accusations might be thought sufficient to render men criminal, and if all the aspersions and calumnies which foul-mouthed Envy can invent and disperse, might be taken for the words of Truth and Soberness, then indeed Christianity would be made the most pestilential Doctrine, and the Professors of it the greatest Villains in the World. For such is the busie and indefatigable nature of that irreconcilable enemy of Mankind, *Satan*, as to be always sending forth his Emissaries and Agents for the bespattering of that Innocency which they cannot corrupt: and they retain stilly that Lesson which one of his aptest Scholars first learned and broached, the *Florentine Machiavel*, that if they do but calumniate strongly, and throw dirt with both hands, they may be sure that some of it will stick. It is no wonder then that the poor Church of *England* should at this day be loaded with a
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contrariety of slanderous reproaches, and have such imputations fastned upon her, as are inconsistent with, and repugnant to each other. Her Enemies abroad shall accuse her of Novelty, Faticism, Schism, and Heresie, and all those hard names which may affright the Vulgar: and her Back-friends at home shall impeach her of Popeny, as if she was now the next door to Rome, and just going to throw her self into the arms of that *Step-Mother*, who by an unnatural ferity and not fondness, would squeeze her to death. Her Orthodox and Regular Clergy have been boldly aspersed by * some as the *Scochers* of their Prince; and again they are represented by others as the *Flatterers* of the People. Sometimes we are drawn as the great *Buoyers up of Arbitrary Government*, as if we, of all others were such creeping Fools as to be ambitious of Slavery: and then again with another dash the Picture is quite altered, and so we are taken to be such *Impostors as Cajole the Multitude*. Such a Conformity does this Body of our Church bear to its mystical Head Christ Jesus, that as in many other things, so in this also, she like him, hath been crucified betwixt two Thieves. Here indeed is our comfort, that we have no worse treatment than our great Lord had; *And if they called the Master of the House Beelzebub, what language may the Servants of the Family expect?* He, although he was rightly titled

* A Scandalous Pamphlet entituled, *A Letter from a Person of Quality to a Friend in the Country.*

filed the Prince of Peace, yet was he vehemently accused as a mover of Sedition. He, who in the case of Tribute gave Caesar his utmost due, yet was he highly clamoured against as no Friend to Caesar. Joh. 19. 12. And as he, so his Apostles also were trailed before Tribunals as the greatest Criminals. To instance in none but our Apostle S. Paul, you find him here in this Chapter called before a Tribunal, and a pert Orator *Tertullus* started out against him, who with a great deal of vehemency and malignity of Spirit, calls him v. 5. *a pestilent Fellow, a mover of Sedition among all the Jews throughout the World, and a Ring-leader of the Sect of the Nazarens.* The Apostle v. 10. is admitted to speak in his own defence; who not retorting the foul language which his adversary was master of, with a great deal of modesty and ingenuiry wipes off the main body of their charge, only confessing that innocent part of it, that after the way which they call *Herésie*, *so worshipped he the God of his Fathers*: this sets him right in the opinion of his Judge, and he is likely now to have a fair Trial. In the interim (till *Lycias* the chief Captain came, who was a principal witness in the case) the Governour *Felix* sends for Paul, that he might preach to him concerning the *Faith in Christ*. And you have here in my Text, the Grounds and Heads of S. Pauls Discourse, with the effect and consequence of it: *For as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance and judgment to come, Felix trembled.* In

In which words be pleased to observe with me these three particulars.

First, The Subject or Matter of S. Pauls Discourse; and that contains these three things, *Righteousness, Temperance, and Judgment to come.*

Secondly, The Manner of the Apostles handling them; and that is expressed in this Phrase, *διαλογισμὸν αὐτῷ*, by a way of Reasoning.

Thirdly, The Influence which his Discourse had upon his great Auditor; *It made him tremble. For when he reasoned, &c.*

I begin with the first :

I. The Subject or Ground-work of S. Pauls Discourse, and that you see contains these three things, *Righteousness, Temperance, and Judgment to come.*

1. Of *Righteousness* : The word in the Original is *δικαιοσύνη*, and is of so large a signification as to comprehend the whole Moral Law; the Duties of the first and second Table. The word *Righteousness* or *Justice*, is, as *Aristotle* defines it, *suum cuique tribuere*, to give every one his due; *suum Deo* first, and then *suum proximo*; to give God his due, and then your Neighbour also. First the word *Righteousness*, as it relates to God, does contain all that religious worship which we owe unto him; it comprehends the dedication of our souls and bodies to his service, it involves such a fixing of our thoughts and affections upon that all-

al. sufficient being, as with a pleasing violence will constrain us to love him, even with all our heart, and with all our soul, and all our mind. And can there be a greater piece of Righteousness than to pay all our services to him, who gave us all we have? Can any thing be more just and equitable than that we should pay our hearty thanks for that which we can never requite? Do we allow our earthly Parents an ingenuous submission, and humble observance, and shall we be peevish and perverse, stubborn and refractory to the Father of Spirits? 'Tis the unavoidable consequence of this argument, and the perpetual regret which wicked men find in their consciences for not complying with it, that hath made them endeavour all they can to persuade themselves to be Atheists; and therefore they have taken up a new and wholesale way of discharging their obligations, by the bold denial of that Deity, to whom they should pay them. Not but that I am very confident their hearts give their tongues the Lie; and they are onely got to a cold Wish, but can never arrive to a warm Belief, *there is no God*. For we may have seen some Children that have been so ungracious, as to refuse to give the honour due unto a Parent, but there was never any so irrational as to deny they had a Father.

But yet such is the impudence and folly of the Age we live in, as to say, and defend any thing :

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to fanſie our ſelves to have ſprung up like a *Fungus* or *Muſhrome*, rather than believe we had our original from an Infinite Wiſdom and Power, the Characters of which are ſo very legible in our Faces, and yet much more in our Souls. But it is not with ſuch men that I deſign to argue (if there were any ſuch here) becauſe, in truth, they ought to be looked upon as perſons out of their

* *Esſe Deos
qui negat, vix
eum ſana men-
tis exiſtimem.*
Tul. nat. deor.
l. 2.

* wits : but I would rather apply my ſelf to all thoſe that are well backt with power and authority, that by a moſt ſtrict and impartial execution of the Laws, thoſe Contemnners of Religion may be bridled and corrected : and that men ſhould be as fearful to burleſque the Scriptures, and blaſpheme God, as they are to ſpeak and maintain the blackeſt Treason againſt their Prince.

I confeſs it might do well if they could be treated as the Law hath provided for, and as indeed they are, mad men, if they could be ordered to a *Dark Lodging* and *Coarſe Diet* ; for that would be the moſt effectual means to the reducing of them to a ſobriety of mind, as well as of body. And as for us who are fully convinced, that the profeſſion of our Faith in God, and the acknowledgment of our dependance on him, are things highly reaſonable, and indiſpenſably neceſſary ; ſo let us chearfully and faithfully continue in them : and ſeeing it is impoſſible for any to argue, let them never laugh us into Infidelity. Let our care be
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in all our devotions to mix an inward sincerity with an outward gravity, that nothing undecent and unbecoming may be seen in us by God or Man. As we would abhor the sight of that Prodigy, a *Speculative Atheist*, so let not us make our selves a greater, by being *Practical* ones. And if by continuance in this course, we do not find our selves defaultive in this * righteousness towards God, then we may be confident there will be seen in us the fruits of that righteousness which is due to our Neighbour: and that is the

* *Sublata pietate fies c-tiam, & societatis humani generis, & una excellentissima virtus iustitia tollitur.* Tull. nat. deor. l. 1.

Second thing contained in this phrase of my Text, his *reasoning of righteousness*.

It is this Justice or Righteousness which is commonly called a Cardinal Vertue; for as the Door leans and turns upon the Hinges, so the intire carriage and deportment of our whole life betwixt us and our Neighbour should be born up and backed by the bands of Justice. Whatsoever comes within the compass of that *νόμος βασιλικός* (as S. James calls it) the *Royal Law*, *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self*; even all the offices and instances of duty between man and man, they are all comprised in this long word, but larger virtue, *δικαιοσύνη*. In this is comprehended reverence and obedience to our Superiors, curtesie and humanity to our Equals, kindness and condescension to our Inferiors, with justice and upright dealing towards all.

It might do well, if some would consider it, how great a share of Justice is contained in paying an high reverence to the Persons, and a strict obedience to the well contrived Laws of their Governors. I am sure they are very forgetful of their duty, and themselves, who bespatter the Government with most virulent Libels, and are not afraid (with those filthy Dreamers S. Jude speaks of) *to despise Dominion, and speak evil of Dignities*. And Superiors too, although they need not be taught, yet they may be modestly put in mind how much Justice becomes them, and that their Robes never look so gloriously and splendidly as when they are lined with Justice. If Righteousness and Judgment are the habitation of Gods Throne, and Justice be said to stand fast by his Judgment Seat; then certainly those that are stiled *gods* need not be ashamed to have them sit upon the Seat of Judicature with them. It was a smart reply of the old Woman to a great Prince, who, when he told her *he was not at leisure to do her Justice*, returned, *Why then are you at leisure to be a King?* Away with those Parasites that would flatter their Prince to believe this to be a piece of as good Divinity as it is Poetry,

----*stat pro ratione voluntas.*

You shall never find any, except the fool-hardy *Atheist*, that would make his Prince a *Leviathan*; exempt him clearly from the eternal Laws of
God

v. 8.

Psal. 82.6.

God and Nature, and give him leave to legitimate the greatest Villanies, and make the *Alcoran* Canonical if he pleases. No, no; *S. Paul* reasoned of righteousness to this great *Felix*; notwithstanding he was the Husband of three Queens, as *Suetonius* tells us, and the Governour of *Judea*, as *S. Paul* assures us. And I am very much inclined to believe that *S. Paul* preached on such a Subject, upon the account of its appositeness and fitness to the condition of his Auditor. He had heard, without doubt, by the publick voice of Fame, or some other way, that he had made his Government infamous by Tyranny and Cruelty; and therefore he fairly lays before him, how necessary it was for one of his quality to be clothed with Justice, and leaves his own guilty conscience to make the application. And that you may not fanſie this to be a fond conjecture of mine, be pleased to take the censure which that weighty Historian *Tacitus* gives you of him. * *Antonius Felix* being of a fordid nature, did abuse his trust of Government with all kind of licentiousness and cruelty: yea his low and mercenary disposition may safely be concluded from the Verse which follows my Text, where *S. Luke* tells us he expected a Bribe from *Paul*, and hoped that some money should have been given him to set him free. This was a base unworthy thing indeed, to make Justice mercenary, which can ne-

V. Hobs Lev.

Suet. in Claud.
vir. 28.* *Antonius Felix* per omnem
servitiam ac li-
bidinem jus re-
gium servili
ingenio exer-
cuit. *Corn.*
Tacit. Hist. 5.
V. 26.

ver.

ver be undervalued so much, as when in this manner it hath a price set on it.

And as this Vertue extends it self to Superiors and Inferiors, so likewise must it have a great influence amongst those that are Equals. What is it that distinguishes a Society of Men, from a Herd of wild Beasts? Is it not the greedy snatching, and rapacious devouring of the latter? And is it not the fair and mild, the just and generous dealing of the former? If we once come to verify that old Adage, *Homo homini Lupus*, One man is a Wolf to another, we should leave nothing to be distinguished by, but the outward appearance and countenance; whereas those that live mutually within the bounds of Justice, O how peaceable and safe is their condition? how free are they from noise and tumult? how much exempt from all fears of disturbance? Yea there is nothing more calm and quiet than their outward condition, except it be the inward state and temper of their mind. How easily can the just man obtain his ends, seeing nothing extravagant and unhandsome is contained in them? For as it is an infallible rule in Geometry, that of all Lines or Surfaces contained within the same bounds, the streight line, and the plain surface are the shortest; so is it also in morality: for by the right line of Justice upon the plain ground of Vertue, a man will soonest arrive to any well-chosen

chosen end. To clamber (as a learned man says) V.D. Barrows
Serm. on Prov.
10.9. over the Fences of Duty, to break through Hedges of Right, to trespass upon hallowed Inclosures, may seem the most short and compendious ways of getting thither where one would be: but doth not a man venture breaking his neck, or scratching his face, incurring the greatest mischief and trouble thereby? But thus much for the first Vertue which S. Paul discoursed to *Felix*, when he reasoned of righteousness; which contained our duty to God; and our Neighbour also. I pass on to the Second, and that is *Temperance*; or if you take it from the Fountain *ἐν κρείττα*.

Now although the original of the word may argue it a Masculine, yet methinks it may not improperly be stiled a Maiden Vertue, because it keeps the Soul clean and tight. The word contains in it these two things, *Sobriety* and *Chastity*.

First *Sobriety*: This is the Vertue which bears up and contains a man within the grandeur of his own species. If he once falls besides this, he then drops into a confederacy with Brutes; yea, can scarce be thought a fit companion for them. They indeed only gratifie the longings of Nature, but he can never be satisfied unless you drown him. How unfit is an intemperate man to be admitted as a sure Friend, or a faithful Confident, when he is so ready to pour out all his secrets with his sur-
fetings.

fertings into his next mans bosom? How unqualified is he for any imployment? He is either too idle, or too busie; too light, or too heavy. And what way shall he take to find out any thing, who in the first place hath lost himself? But he that keeps himself abstemious and sober, hath his Wits about him, and his reason clear, and is in a good capacity to manage his own or the publick business, without being obnoxious to those affronts and injuries which Intemperance would expose him to: at the least he may keep a safe guard upon his own body, and so beat off all undecent onsets and assaults that would violate his *Chastity*. And that is the second thing contained in the word *ἐνδεαλεια*.

Now the loveliness of this Vertue can no better appear, than by comparing it with the Deformity of the contrary Vice. The odiousness of which may in some measure be collected, by that regret and checking which it puts upon the spirits of men in their first violations of Chastity, How often are they put to the blush, before they can arrive to an impudence in sin? How fearfully do they stand trembling between guilt and horror, and are at length forced to rush into the darkest corners, as being the fittest places for the works of darkness? I confess indeed, the immodesty of our Times hath almost broke the force of this argument; for our Gallants are got to that height

height of Impiety, as you shall hear them glorying in nothing but their shame. Modesty is now looked upon as a childish and ungentile quality; but he is the man of spirit and breeding, who delights to wallow like a Beast in the grossest sensuality. Good God! How far are they sunk below the nature of men that can boast of their sins of that kind, as of their special excellency? When, if that be the measure, a libidinous Goat must confessedly be esteemed the more excellent Creature.

But let us look back a little from our Times, and see how the case stood when *Felix* was Governour. We may very much fear, that *Felix* himself was highly guilty of the breach of temperance: and I am more than half persuaded, that *S. Paul* pickt out these two Vertues, Righteousness and Temperance, to discourse unto him, that he might seriously lay to heart how shamefully he had prevaricated both in one and the other. For as before we represented him to you as one unacquainted with Justice, so now he shall appear as great a stranger to Temperance: His Wife *Drusilla*, was as great in birth, as she was infamous in life. She was the Niece of *Anthony* and *Cleopatra*, says *Tacitus*, the daughter of *Herod* the Great, the sister of *Agrippa* junior, but a most lascivious woman: who having forsaken the princely bed of her own Husband, followed

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Tac. Hist. 5.

Vid. Groc. in loc.

her Gallant *Felix*, with whose love and beauty being taken, she was at length married to him. Such were the guilty Auditors of our Apostles Sermon, and as we may suppose, he reasoned to them of the excellency of these two Virtues, Righteousness and Temperance, and might with-all, shew them the great shame that even in this life would follow such practices as they took; so we are sure he pressed them home with the reflections of a future state, and called to their remembrance that there was a Judgment to come. Which is the

Third and last thing in the Subject of *S. Paul's* Discourse; *For he reasoned to them of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come.*

And here also I shall briefly consider two things, the Certainty, and Terribleness of that future Judgment: the Certainty of the thing it self, and the Terribleness of its circumstances. First for its certainty: And this may be cleared either from the consideration of our own, or the divine nature, from the contemplation of our selves who are to be subjected to it, or of that God who is to execute it.

First, If we contemplate our selves, the very frame and constitution of our natures have the *Idæa's* of Immortality, and a future existency stamped upon them. You have the general consent and approbation of mankind in all ages and places.

places of the World to countenance and confirm this truth. It is not a new invention, nor an upstart notion of yesterday; but claims an acquaintance with Mankind, even from his first Original; and hath through all vicissitudes stuck so close to him, that we may safely conclude it will never leave him to the end of the World. Let our Navigators sail either to the East or West Indies, let them make their Voyages either towards the North or South Poles, yet amongst all that variety of Faces, Customs, Religions, and Tempers, every one kept the notion of a future Being, and that their actions were to be rewarded or punished when they went from hence. The cold *Russian* keeps this truth wrapt up in his warm Furs, and the scorched *Moor* sees it almost as plain and naked as his own body. Yea, it is the observation of *Pliny*, that those barbarous people that have neither Cloths to cover their nakedness, nor Laws for a common security, that live by the rules of ferity and lust; and differ from the Beasts seemingly, in little else but external shape; that have neither Towns nor Houses, and but just reason enough to provide for the necessities of Nature; yet these live in expectation and belief of a life after this. Now if this was not a most certain truth grounded upon principles obvious to all, what reason could we give of so universal a consent? How can it be imagi-

ned that all men should conspire to deceive themselves and their innocent posterity? Certainly it may well be thought to be the first-born of absurdities to think that those who are at so vast a distance in place and nature, and all other circumstances, should agree in a common deceit, and jump in the same imposture? For how should all the World conspire in a Lie? How come the best of men to have earnest desires and longings after a future state? and how come the worst of men to be horribly afraid of it? What is the meaning of that strong aversion which all considerate men have against a dark state of annihilation? What is the matter that Reason cannot think of it without great regret of mind? How comes it to pass that there is a natural desire in all men after a state of happiness and perfection? It is generally agreed that no natural desire is in vain: all other things have somewhat to satisfy their natural appetites. And if we consider the utter impossibility of attaining to any such condition in this life, this will render it highly credible that there must be another state wherein this happiness is attainable; otherwise mankind must fail of his chief end, being by a natural principle most strongly inclined to such a state of happiness as he can never attain to. As if he were purposely framed to be tormented between these two Passions, Desire and Despair;

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* Princip. of
Nat. Relig.
by the L.B. of
Chester.

an earnest propension after happiness, and an utter incapacity of ever enjoying it. As if Nature it self, whereby all other things are disposed to their perfection, did serve only in mankind to make them miserable. And which is yet more considerable, the better and the wiser any man is, the more earnest desires and hopes hath he after such a state of happiness. So that if there be no such thing as a future existence, not onely Nature but Vertue likewise must contribute to make men miserable: which is a consequence so grossly unreasonable as not to be swallowed.

And how comes it to pass that wicked men also cannot throw away those notions which they would so gladly be shut of? What is the meaning that among the jollities of this life, they are irresistibly put in mind of being called to a reckoning in another? When their actions are so secret that they cannot be discerned, and their persons so powerful that they cannot be punished by an earthly tribunal, How come they then to be seized with the horrors of an all-discerning and all-controlling Judicature? What shall we think of it, when those who have made it their business to root out of the minds of men all such troublesom notions about a future state should yet be the persons who are most assaulted with them.

Hi sunt qui trepidant & ad omnia fulgura pallent.

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These are they that shake and tremble at their own thoughts; and if they do but hear a clap of Thunder, they imagine that voice is calling them to a Judgment to come. But to proceed:

Secondly, The consideration of Gods Nature, as well as our own, will abundantly prove a future Judgment. For when we think upon the Divine Nature, we must look upon him as clothed with an attribute of inflexible and unalterable Justice. His Justice is so essential to his Godhead, that we may as well deny him to be God as to be Just. We may therefore infallibly conclude *that God is a most just Judge*: and if he be so, we may as safely conclude, that after this life he will judge the World in righteousness. For as the affairs of this present World are ordered, though they lie under the disposition of Providence, yet they shew no sign of an universal Justice. The divine dispensations in this life, are many times promiscuous and uncertain; so that
 Eccles. 9. 1. a man cannot judge of love or hatred, by all that is before him. The worst of men are sometimes in the best condition; and the best men may generally take up those words of S. Paul, *If in this life onely we had hope, we should be of all men most miserable*. The proud Tyrant doth lift up his head against Heaven and yet prospers; when the devout soul may lift up his hands thither, and yet be undone. So that nothing is more certain
 1 Cor. 15. 19. than

than that in this life, Rewards are not correspondent to the Vertues, nor Punishments proportionable to the sins of men. Which consideration must needs make us infer a future state, and day of accounts; and then we shall be forced to acknowledge in the words of the Psalmist, that *Verily there is a reward for the righteous, doubtless there is a God that judgeth the earth.* Psal. 58. 11. Thus the belief of a Judgment-day, is not (you see) a Panick fear or melancholy dream. It is no trick of Politicians or *Mormo* of Priests to fright Fools and keep the World in awe: but brings such reasons and considerations for its reception, as may make us conclude it to be unquestionably certain. And as we have considered the Certainty of the thing itself, so in the next place, let us not forget the Terribleness of its circumstances.

As to these indeed we are altogether beholden to Divine Revelation. For although the light of Nature can inform us in general that there will be a Day of Judgment, and we may surely look for it: yet it is not able to conjecture what shall be the Solemnities of that time, nor with what pomp and majesty the Judge shall appear. It is true, the Holy Ghost hath drawn the transactions of this day in lively colours; and they are laid before us, under the resemblance of a formal Judiciary Process. The Books are said to be opened, the Judge is placed upon his Throne, and all

all the Sons of men that ever lived upon the Earth, stand listening to hear their Sentence at that dreadful Bar. And seeing *at our Lords coming the powers of Heaven shall be* * *shaken*, that is, (as some learned Fathers interpret) the Angels themselves (though pure and innocent Creatures) shall quake and tremble. What consternation shall seize upon the spirits of men, who know themselves to be loaded with sin and dust? O how passionately and differently will mankind be concerned at that time! What transports of Joy, what raptures of Bliss shall be read in the countenances of Gods Children, when as the faces of the wicked shall gather blackness; and the distraction of their eyes, and shivering of their bodies, will set forth those dismal agonies their souls are in. The jovial Drunkard shall then drop the sparkling Glass out of his fingers, and will find that his great draughts here, will highly inflame both his reckoning and his thirst hereafter. The spruce Lover shall then exchange his languishing for a more tormenting kind of unquenchable flame. The profest Worldling will (like a profuse Prodigal) be throwing away his beloved Bags: for alas! he knows they will not be taken there as good security. The merry Droll and scoffer at Religion, will then be quite put out of tune as well as countenance. The bold and daring Atheist shall then stand sneaking and

* Mat. 24. 29.
Orig. and Chry-
sol.

and trembling; and be horribly astonished at the sight of his former folly, and approaching misery: *But as for the righteous, it shall not be so with them.* It will be their day of festivity and triumph, for *they shall be called forth to the marriage-supper of the Lamb.* The just man then shall live by his faith, and the bountiful man shall find the rewards of his charity: the temperate person shall drink of the Rivers of bliss, and the chaste soul shall be swallowed up in the arms of infinite love. These, or such as these, will be the various circumstances which will crown the solemnity of the last Judgment. Happy are we if either the loveliness of the one, or the affrightfulness of the other, can prevail with us to make up our accounts against that day. And thus much may suffice for the first particular, having considered the subject, or matter of *S. Pauls Discourse*, as it contained in it these three things, *Righteousness, Temperance, and Judgment to come*; I pass on now to the

Second particular, which is, to consider the manner of the Apostles handling them, and that is expressed διαλεγομένης αὐτοῦ, by a way of Reasoning.

There are two sorts of men that are for far different ways of preaching from this which *S. Paul* used. If they had been to make a Proselyte of *Felix*, Oh! they would never have done it by the carnal way of reason. The two extreams that

I mean, are the *Romanists* on one side, and the *Enthusiasts* on the other. Those would force you to be Christians by the severe methods of violence and cruelty; and these would lead you by the Dark-Lantern of the Spirit into a Fools Paradise, taking all the Whimfies of their own Brains for Divine Illuminations. We will consider each of them a little, and then we shall better see the difference from that method which *S. Paul* took. It cannot be denied but the *Romish* contrivance is very strong and powerful; but then here is the fault of it, they are so extremely bent upon the making of us Christians, as that they quite forget we are so much as Men. It was this method which the *Spaniards* used in the Conversion of the poor *Indians*, when they held Water in the one hand, and a Dagger in the other; putting them to their choice of the two Baptisms, the one of Water, and the other of Blood. Thus *Henry III.* thought to fright the Young Prince of *Conde* out of his Religion, by that equally sharp & short way of argument, containing but these three words, * *Mass, Death, or Bastile*. The same sanguinary method they practised here with us in *Q. Maries* days, when they made use of that admirable way of enlightning the Understanding with a *Faggot*. And that they are well-wishers to the same way still, their late attempts upon us have abundantly proved: when, if the mercy of God had

* *Davila's*
Hist. Civ. Wars
of France.

had not frustated their Cruelty, they would have tried how our Nation might have been reformed by the destruction of it. But this we are sure of, our Lord never practised nor approved this severe way of proceeding. For when his Disciples were in a transport of zeal, and the two sons of Thunder would have been sons of Lightning too, and would have called down fire to consume the *Samaritans*, he cools their flame by a mild reproof, saying, *Ye know not what manner of Spirit ye are of; for the Son of man is not come to destroy mens lives, but to save them.* S. Peter too, receives a check for drawing a Sword in defence of his Master; when, if ever it be lawful to use sanguinary weapons, he might have urged it then for the defence of so much innocency. S. Paul also was a great enemy to popular Reformations, *Ephes. 6. 17.* advising them to take no other Sword than that of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

But here the Enthusiastick Zelot will be catching hold of the Sword of the Spirit, and say, why, this is our method; it is onely the Spirit that we plead for: *Take heed therefore that ye be not found fighters against God.* We are the men that discard Reason, knowing that God has rejected the wise and prudent, and will reveal his mind to none but the simple ones.

But if these men will be laying a claim to any new Revelations, or to such a measure of

the Spirit as the Apostles had, let them but shew the Letters of Credence which they did: let them but work Miracles and we will believe. Otherwise we must not be so silly, to take all for Gold that Glisters; nor the Hypochondriack Vapours in some mens heads, for the pure Infusions of Gods Spirit. We may allow indeed in any sense, that their Speech and Preaching is not with the enticing words of Mans Wisdom; but then let them shew them to be (as S. Paul did) in the demonstration of the Spirit and of Power. To prevent therefore these pious Frauds (for Rome you see hath not engrossed them all to her self) S. John says, *Beloved believe not every spirit, but trie the spirits whether they are of God; because many false spirits are gone out into the World.* And this is S. Pauls rule which he lays down for our instruction, in the first place *prove all things, and then hold fast that which is good.*

1 Cor. 2. 4.
1 Joh. 4. 1.
1 Theff. 5. 21.

I would not be so far mistaken, as if any thing I have said were injurious to Faith; for I desire that Reason may be no higher than the Hand-maid. Onely I think it no good way to pull her eyes out, as if that would make her see the better to follow her Mistrefs. This I am sure of, Faith can no where be found but in a reasonable nature: and therefore there can be no such implacable antipathy, no such irre-

irreconcilable jarring between them, as some do imagine. * Why may they not then salute one another *ἀλλήλους φιλήματα*, with the Kifs of Charity? Why should there be a perpetual feud or strife between Faith and Reason, seeing they are Brethren? Do they not both spring from the same Father of Lights? And can the Fountain of Love and Unity send forth any irreconcilable Streams? No, no, These two great Luminaries may shine together without obscuring each others Light; for whatsoever appears to be a truly Divine Revelation must needs be reasonable. But I confess all arguments are thrown away upon these men, whose very Opinion makes them incurable and incapable. For if we speak reason to them, that is the thing which they so much disclaim; and if we do not speak reason, that were too disclaim it too. But thus much for the second particular, having considered the manner of the Apostles handling them; and that is expressed, *Ἀπολογούμενοι αὐτοῖς*, by a way of Reasoning.

3. I come now in order to the third and last, which is, to take notice of the influence that his Discourse had upon his great Auditor; it made him tremble. *For when he reasoned, &c.*

Now all that I shall collect from this particular

* V. Calverm.
Light of Nat.

cular is reducible to these two Points :

First, The wonderful efficacy of the preaching of the Word : And

Secondly, The smart reflections that accompany the guilty Conscience.

First, It argues a strange efficacy and power in the Word preached, that like Lightning, it should in a moment, and undiscernably pierce the most intimate parts of the soul. Who would not wonder that a poor despised Minister of the Gospel, should make one of the Grantees of the World tremble? That a contemptible Prisoner in his Chain, should strike such a chillness into the limbs of his Judge, that the warmth of his Robes could not keep him from shaking? But yet such is the efficacy of the Gospel preached, as that it works wonders upon the most obstinate sinner, and wakens him into an affrightment out of the deepest Lethargy. It is upon this account that the Word hath so many various appellations in Scripture, all expressing the great powerfulness of its operations.

In the Prophet *Isaiah* it is stiled *A Rod*, and in the Revelations of Saint *John*, it is called *A Sword*;

Sword ; to intimate , that at sometimes it will *lash* and *correct* ; and at others , if there be greater need , it will *flash* and *wound*. The Prophet *Jeremy* compares it both to a Hammer and Fire ; because on some occasions it (like the Hammer) beats in pieces the Flinty Heart : and if the necessity be urgent, it can put on the nature of Fire ; which melting down all the Scum and Dross , can make the soul run into such a pure Metal , as that she neither fears the Fire nor Touch-stone. S. *Paul* calls it *the savour of Life and Death* : which expression doth closely insinuate the subtle Energy and powerful working thereof ; which can kill as well by a Scent, as by a Wound ; as well by a Breath, as by a Blow. And if that of the fourth of the *Hebrews*, at the twelfth, was not principally designed to our purpose, (some learned men understanding it of the Eternal Son of God,) yet at least we may borrow the words in a secondary notion, and avouch with as much truth as confidence, that the Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged Sword ; piercing even to the dividing asunder of Soul and Spirit , and of the Joints and Marrow , and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the Heart. Howsoever we are sure that *Felix* was an Experiment in this kind ; and that

Jer. 23. 29.

2 Cor. 2. 16.

that the horror in his soul, and the trembling in his limbs, did argue the wonderful efficacy of the Word preached. But then

Secondly, The Effect and Consequent of Saint Pauls Discourse: *Felix* his trembling doth with as much clearness argue the smart reflexions of the guilty Conscience. S. Pauls Discourse of Righteousness and Temperance touched him to the quick, who was highly and notoriously guilty of the breach of both: and a preconception which he had of Judgment after death, now heightened by the Apostles particular description, did make his soul startle within him; as if he more thought of being called presently to the Bar as a guilty Prisoner, than sitting upon the Bench as a powerful Judge. So tender and sensible a thing is the Conscience, that though men endeavour by the frequent Wounds they give it, to bring a certain kind of brawniness and toughness upon it; yet it always keeps some part so soft and quick of sense, that they can never go Scot-free, without some gripes and twitchings from this Impartial Remembrancer.

Yet I make no question but the Hot-headed Debauchees of this Age, do reproach *Felix* for his Cowardliness of Spirit; and cannot but wonder that a Sermon should raise a trembling in
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in him, when if they had been his Auditors, it would sooner have raised their laughter. What! Shall a sneaking Black-Coat put such Gentlemen of birth and breeding into an affright? Shall a Discourse of future Judgment scare them into their Wits? Shall any one think to reduce them to Sobriety, by telling them they must one day be called to a reckoning? No, no; all this shall produce no seriousness of thought, but rather a volley of the deepest Oaths and Blasphemies, and make them cry out in the Modish Language of our Times; *God Damme, What will this Babler say?* Why should any one with such a serious thing as a Judgment to come, put a Damp upon the Pleasantness, or any Allay into the Gaiety of their Temper and Humour; seeing they proclaim an equal hatred to all Consideration, and the Awe of any thing; and are resolved to be guilty of as little Fear as Wit?

Now all the advice that can be given to them (if they be capable of any) is to lay aside their levity and trifling frame of Spirit; and to consider the things of another World with that sobriety of mind, and steady composedness, as becomes a business of so great a consequence.

That seemingly odd advice which the Old

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Spanish

Spanish Gentleman gave to his Son, when he was upon a Voyage to the *Indies*, is the onely Instruction which I shall point out to them : "My Son (says he) in the first place keep thy Gravity, and in the next place fear God. Intimating that a man must first be serious before he can be religious. Howsoever, if they will not do this freely, and of their own accord, one smart fit of sickness will constrain them to it; and the Conscience being then awakened, will croud into their company, and make them cry out with the Unclean Spirit, *What have we to do with thee; art thou come to torment us before our time?* The sad circumstances that accompany a Death-bed, will make them somewhat sensible, though they have been long dead in sin; and the Scene of their mirth will then be quite altered, being conscious why they, as well as *Felix*, should fear and tremble. As for us, beloved, let the sight of such examples produce in us a strict caution, and great abhorrence of them; that we may not contract such a confidence in sin, as if our Consciences were seared with a hot Iron. Let us use our utmost endeavours for the keeping of the Soul soft and tender: and that must be by giving a check to the first beginnings of sin, lest the Soul by being often deflowred and violated, should
cast

cast away all shame, and her innocence together.

And thus have we concluded our third and last particular, which was to consider the influence which *S. Paul's* Discourse had upon his great Auditor, it made him tremble. *For as he reasoned, &c.*

Now all that I have to say by way of Application, shall be in short this: that every man would examine himself, what a Proficient he is in those Vertues of Righteousness and Temperance: for they must come under an Examination one day, and it will be a great piece of wisdom to make up our accompts exactly, seeing by no wits of ours they may be declined or shuffled off. I cannot urge a stronger, nor more general motive than this: for who would not tremble with *Felix*, if he once enter into the serious thoughts of a Judgment to come? For then every man is to be tried for his life, and an eternity of Bliss or Woe, doth hang upon the sentence. *We must all appear* (says the Apostle ^{2 Cor. 5. 10.}) *before the Judgment Seat of Christ.* This *All* is without any exception, the glorious Prince as well as the sordid Peasant; and he that sits upon the Throne, as well as he that grinds at the Mill. Be they Rich or Poor, Noble or Ignoble; there shall be none so mean as to escape

unregarded: none so mighty as to decline the Tribunal. And though we stand here at a becoming distance before our earthly Tribunals, yet when we come to make our personal appearance at the last and great Assizes; then all those outward distinctions of Pomp and Grandeur will be declined, and the Emperour and Beggar shall both stand upon the same Level. Not but that there shall be a strict respect and regard had to the greatness of mens persons and places, so far as they have had an influence upon their actions to make them exemplary: and as all their proceedings have been as eminent and visible as their persons, so shall they be justly rewardable with greater honour, or sorer punishment. *Potentes potenter*, says the Wise Man; Mighty men that have done amiss, shall be mightily tormented: and for the same Reason, those that have done well, as mightily rewarded. The Magistrate must give an account, not onely for his own, but in some measure, for the behaviour of other men. How much he hath encouraged Vertue, and discountenanced Vice: and whether he hath courageously stood up for the defence of Gods Church, by putting all those good Laws in execution which were made for her security.

The Clergy too must give an account of their

their Stewardship: and they shall find either an exceeding weight of Glory, or the greatest load of misery. They must be examined how their Life and Doctrine have agreed together, and whether they have been cloathed with Righteousness, and washed their hands in Innocence before they compassed Gods Altar.

Yea, all inferiour Orders and Degrees of Men shall have a fair and impartial Trial; for every one shall receive *καὶ ἰδὶα τὸ ἑαυτοῦ*, as the best Copies read it, *the things peculiar to his own body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.*

O happy! thrice happy we! if the belief of this great Article will but work upon us. If the thoughts of a Judgment to come, and a general Resurrection will have but the same effect and influence that it had upon S. Paul, ^{Acts 24.16.} that every one of us may exercise our selves in such a manner, as to keep always a Conscience void of offence both towards God, and towards men: that we may take care above all things that our own hearts condemn us not, and then may we have confidence towards God, that he will in his good time bring us to those regions of bliss, of which he hath given us some gusts and foretastes here.

Unto

Unto which happy state God of his infinite
 mercy bring us, for Iesus Christ his sake;
 To whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost,
 be ascribed all Honour, Glory, Power, Might,
 Majesty, and Dominion, now and for ever.
Amen.

FINIS.
